

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested in view of the following remarks.

The specification has been amended in various places to correct inadvertent typographical errors including those mentioned at the top of page two of the Official Action. Accordingly, withdrawal of the objection to the disclosure is respectfully requested.

Claim 1 has also been amended without narrowing the claim scope to incorporate the changes suggested in the middle of page two of the Official Action. Accordingly, withdrawal of the claim objection is respectfully requested.

Appreciation is expressed to Examiner Estremsky for the indication that Claims 5-9 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. By way of this Amendment, new independent Claims 10 and 11 are presented. Claim 10 sets forth the subject matter recited in original Claims 1-5, and Claim 11 sets forth the subject matter recited in original Claims 1-4 and 6. Claims 10 and 11, together with dependent Claims 12-14, are thus allowable.

In light of the foregoing, the only independent claim currently at issue is Claim 1 which is directed to a door lock apparatus for a vehicle that comprises a latch, an operating member, a control unit, an operated member, a restricting member, and detecting means. The latch is provided at either the vehicle door or the vehicle body and is rotatable between an open position in which the latch is disengageable from a striker and a lock position in which the latch is prohibited from disengaging from the striker. The operating member performs one of a lock operation for rotating the latch to the lock position and an unlock operation for rotating the latch to the open position

by being moved from a neutral position to a first position by a driving source, and performs the other one of the lock operation and the unlock operation by being moved from the neutral position to a second position opposite to the first position relative to the neutral position by the driving source. The control unit switches the moving direction of the operating member so that the operating member alternatively performs the lock operation and the unlock operation. The operated member is operated along with the operating member moved to the second position, the restricting member restricts movement of the operated member in a predetermined position when the operating member is moved to the first position, and the detecting means detects the operated member positioned adjacent to the predetermined position. The control unit enters a standby mode through a process of bringing the operating member to return to the second position side after one of the lock operation and the unlock operation is completed so that the operated member is not detected by the detecting means. The control unit also enters the standby mode through a process of bringing the operating member to return to the first position side after the other one of the lock operation and the unlock operation is completed so that the operated member is detected by the detecting means.

The Official Action sets forth a rejection of independent Claim 1 based on the disclosure contained in U.S. Patent No. 4,762,851 to *Matsumoto*. It appears that the reference to U.S. Patent No. 4,762,851 in the Official Action was intended to be a reference to U.S. Patent No. 4,762,348, and the following remarks are based on this assumption.

The Official Action takes the position that *Matsumoto* discloses an electric door lock system that can be broadly interpreted as including the subject matter

recited in Claim 1. The Official Action observes that the electric door lock system disclosed in *Matsumoto* includes a latch 14 corresponding to the claimed latch, a plate 29 corresponding to the claimed operating member, and a sectoral member 30 corresponding to the claimed operated member. In addition, the Official Action notes that the switch SS2 together with the disclosed control means can be interpreted as corresponding to the claimed restricting member.

Considering the interpretation set forth in the Official Action, one of the differences between the door lock apparatus at issue here and the disclosure in *Matsumoto* pertains to the restricting member. The restricting member in the door lock apparatus of the present invention mechanically restricts the movement of the operated member in a predetermined position when the operating member is moved to the first position. This difference has been set forth in Claim 1 and distinguishes over the disclosure in *Matsumoto* because the switch SS2 together with the control means does not mechanically restrict the movement of the sectoral member 30 in the manner claimed.

It is thus respectfully submitted that the claimed door lock apparatus recited in independent Claim 1 is patentably distinguishable over the door lock device disclosed in *Matsumoto*. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection of independent Claim 1 is respectfully requested.

Dependent Claims 2-9 and 15 are allowable at least by virtue of their dependence from an allowable independent claim. These dependent claims also define further distinguishing features associated with the claimed door lock apparatus. For example, new independent Claim 15 recites that the detecting means is a single switch. The Official Action interprets the sensors SS1, SS2, SS3,

SS4 disclosed in *Matsumoto* as corresponding to the claimed detecting means. The claimed single switch recited in Claim 15 differs from the multiple sensors disclosed in *Matsumoto*.

Early and favorable action with respect to this application is respectfully requested.

Should any questions arise in connection with this application or should the Examiner believe that a telephone conference with the undersigned would be helpful in resolving any remaining issues pertaining to this application the undersigned respectfully requests that he be contacted at the number indicated below.

Respectfully submitted,

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